

# National Current Affairs

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## **PM Modi inaugurates first ever All India Institute of Ayurveda**

On October 17, 2017, Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the All India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA) in Delhi on the occasion of 'National Ayurveda Day'.

- AIIA has been set up as an apex institute under the Ministry of AYUSH and has been modelled along the lines of All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS).
- AIIA has been set up on 10.015 acres of land at a cost of Rs. 157 crore.
- The institute will serve as a platform to establish synergy between traditional wisdom of Ayurveda and modern diagnostic tools and technology.
- AIIA holds the National Accreditation Board for Hospitals and Healthcare Providers (NABH) accreditation.
- Hospital block of AIIA has several clinical facilities including neurological and degenerative disease care unit, diabetes and metabolic/allergic disorders care unit, Yoga, Panchakarma clinic, Kriya Kalpa, rheumatology and musculoskeletal care unit, diabetic retinopathy clinic and infertility clinic.

## **Assam approved new IT policy**

On October 17, 2017, Assam State Government approved a new Information Technology (IT) Policy under which financial support will be provided to companies setting up BPOs, developing software and carrying out research, among others.

### **Under the new policy**

- Government will provide incentives for entrepreneurs, who come to set up IT industries in the state. The incentives will be provided at the time of setting up of the industry.
- It will also provide Rs 1.20 lakh one-time incentive per employee for call centres with minimum intake of 100 employees.
- For the units engaged in software development, the one-time support will be Rs 1.50 lakh per employee.
- Rs 2.5 lakh will be provided as one-time support against every employee for research and development centres having minimum 50 seats.
- Land and power supply will also be provided to these outfits at subsidised rates.
- There will be reduction in land value upto 20 per cent if all the above ventures are set up within IT Park. For ventures outside IT Park, there will 50 per cent subsidy for land purchase.
- Besides, the Cabinet approved the government to offer per unit power subsidy at Rs 3 for BPO and other IT related ventures.

### **Andhra CM Chandrababu Naidu lays foundation stone for TU142M aircraft museum**

On 17th October 2017, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu laid the foundation stone for the TU142M aircraft museum in Visakhapatnam.

- This is being built at the Beach Road in Visakhapatnam.
- The Russian aircraft TU142M was decommissioned at INS Rajali in Tamil Nadu after 29 years. It was brought to Visakhapatnam on 8th April 2017 to be converted into a Museum.

### **Chhattisgarh government reduces interest on loan under Saksham Yojna**

Chhattisgarh State Government has reduced the rate of interest on loan given to women and their self help groups (SHGs) under 'Saksham Yojna' from 6.5 per cent to 5 per cent.

- The initiative will allow the women and SHGs to easily avail the loan facility for self-employment and thereby become self-dependent, he added.
- The Chhattisgarh Mahila Kosh is operated by state women and child development department to disburse easy term loans to women and SHGs.
- Saksham Yojana too is operated by Chhattisgarh Mahila Kosh, under which loans to the tune of Rs 72 lakh had been distributed to about 111 SHGs during current fiscal year 2017-18.
- The district programme and projects officers of the department have been instructed to support women and SHGs for their training under different schemes of CMK and motivate them to avail the loan facility for commercial and business-related activities.

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## **International Current Affairs**

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### **Zimbabwe bans Fruit, Vegetable imports as Forex Crunch Deepens**

The east African landlocked country Zimbabwe, with immediate effect, banned the import of fruits and vegetables to preserve the scarce foreign currencies.

- Already in late 1990's Hyperinflation occurred and thus the stability of the currency had down and therefore the country had to dump its currency for the US dollar.
- The present situation also running short of dollars as well as quasi-currency "bond note" introduced last year to ease cash shortages.

- According to national statistics agency Zimstat, last year Zimbabwe spent more than \$80 million on fruit and vegetables which included tomatoes, onions, carrots, grapes, apples and oranges.
- Many of the Zimbabweans are keeping U.S. dollars at home or they are spending in buying Hard Currency on the black market. This same situation was prevailing during the period of hyperinflation a decade ago.
- Agriculture Minister Joseph Made said, the ban would allow local farmers to increase output while saving the country's foreign currency.

### **India inks MoC to send interns to Japan for training**

India and Japan have signed memorandum of cooperation (MoC) on Technical Intern Training Programme (TITP) to significantly expand the bilateral cooperations in the field of skill development.

- India is the third country with which Japan has signed the MoC.
- Under it, India will send youngsters to Japan as technical interns for on-the-job training for a period of three to five years.
- TITP will serve as an ideal platform through which complementary strengths of India and Japan will be leveraged for mutual benefit.
- The technical interns trained in Japan under TITP will be an asset for the Skill India initiative and will significantly contribute of Government's vision of making India as largest provider of skilled workforce to the world.
- TITP was launched by Japan under Technical Intern Training Act scheduled to come into force in November 2017.

### **Dharmendra Pradhan's two day visit to Japan**

An Indian delegation led by Union Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas, Dharmendra Pradhan visited Tokyo, Japan from 17th – 18th October, 2017 to participate in LNG Producer- Consumer Conference 2017.

- Besides attending LNG Producer- Consumer Conference 2017, Pradhan also met Hiroshige Seko, the Minister of Economy, Trade, and Industry of Japan. Both the ministers discussed issues of bilateral engagement in the hydrocarbon sector.
- On the sidelines of LNG Producer–Consumer Conference 2017, Union Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas, Dharmendra Pradhan met Energy Minister of Mozambique, Leticia Klemens to discuss the development of the gas fields in Mozambique.

### **IIT Bombay top ranked Indian institute in QS Asia University Rankings 2018**

Indian Institute of Technology Bombay (IIT Bombay) has emerged as top-ranked Indian institute in the latest Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) Asia University Rankings 2018.

- IIT Bombay has ranked 34th and is the only Indian institute to better its performance among the top 100 universities in QS Asia University Rankings 2018.
- Earlier this year, IIT Bombay was ranked 179<sup>th</sup> in the QS World University Rankings, showing an improvement in its 2017 performance by 40.
- Other Indian institutes like IIT Delhi ranked at 41, IIT Madras (48), Indian Institute of Science (IISc) Bangalore (51), IIT Kanpur (59), IIT Kharagpur (62), University of Delhi (72), IIT Roorkee (93) and IIT Guwahati (98) showed a decline in their respective rankings as against last year.
- Singapore's Nanyang Technology University has topped QS Asia University Rankings 2018.
- The rankings have been compiled on the basis of several parameters including academic reputation, faculty-student ratio and international faculty.

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## **Business**

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### **MCX launches first commodity options trading with gold**

On October 17, 2017, the auspicious occasion of Dhanteras, Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX) launched trading in Gold option's contract in presence of Finance Minister Arun Jaitley.

- Options contract offers the buyer the right, but not the obligation, to buy or sell a stock/commodity/asset at an agreed-upon price (referred to as strike price) during a certain period of time up to a specific date.
- Underlying for Gold options contract which are currently available for trading are Gold (1 Kg) futures expiring on November 28, 2017 and January 29, 2018.
- Options in securities and commodities market are primarily meant for hedging. However they are also used for speculation.

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## **Awards & Recognition**

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### **Google viewed as Most Authentic Brand in India: “Authentic Brands Study 2017”**

On 17th October 2017, a new survey named “Authentic Brands Study” stated that, Indian consumers regard Google as the most authentic brand.

- In India, Google is considered as the most authentic brand, stated by “Authentic Brands Study 2017” survey conducted by Cohn & Wolfe. It is followed by Microsoft, Amazon.com, Maruti Suzuki and Apple.
- Globally, Amazon occupies the 1st place and Apple the 2nd, as the most authentic brands, according to the Cohn & Wolfe survey.
- According to the survey, 67 % of consumers in India report increased purchase interest in a brand they consider as authentic.
- Cohn & Wolfe’s Authentic Brands Study series examines the role of authenticity in business, the attributes associated with an authentic brand and the impact of authenticity on consumer etc.

### **Indian peacekeepers in South Sudan awarded UN medal**

On 17th October 2017, 50 Indian peacekeepers placed in South Sudan were awarded the UN Medal for their service in maintaining peace in South Sudan.

- The Indian peacekeepers were awarded UN medal for their professionalism and service in protecting civilians and building peace in the conflict driven South Sudan.
- The Indian peacekeepers are a part of the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). They are deployed with the Indian Battalion stationed at Bor in the Jonglei region of South Sudan.
- The award was presented by UNMISS Force Commander General Frank Mushyo Kamanzi.
- Indian peacekeepers have been carrying out patrols across the region and have provided a safe environment for civilians at the UN Protection of Civilians site at Bor.

### **US author George Saunders wins 2017 Man Booker Prize**

American author George Saunders won the 2017 Man Booker Prize, a high-profile literary award for his first full-length novel “Lincoln in the Bardo”.

- With this, he became second consecutive American writer to win prize after Paul Beatty (for his novel The Sellout), after rules were changed in 2014 to allow authors of any book written in English and published in UK to compete.
- George Saunders is American writer of short stories, novellas, essays, children’s books and a novel. He is professor at Syracuse University.

- The Man Booker Prize is the world's most prestigious English-language literary award which aims at promoting the finest literary work in fiction by rewarding the best novel of the year written in English and published in the United Kingdom. It carries cash prize of 50,000 pounds.

### **Javed Akhtar to be honoured with Hridaynath Mangeshkar Award**

Veteran writer and lyricist Javed Akhtar is to be honoured with the Hridaynath Mangeshkar Award.

- Javed Akhtar will be awarded Hridaynath Mangeshkar Award on the 28<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Hridayesh Arts and the 80<sup>th</sup> birthday of veteran music composer Hridaynath Mangeshkar.
- The programme is being presented to celebrate the 75 year old music career of singer Lata Mangeshkar.

### **CSS Corp Wins NASSCOM Customer Service Excellence Award 2017**

CSS Corp, a US-headquartered IT services and technology support company, has won the Customer Service Excellence Award 2017 by National Association of Software and Services Companies (NASSCOM).

- CSS Corp was selected for this award in the transformation category for creating additional revenue generation opportunities for clients globally by leveraging its proprietary tech support and analytics platforms.
- CSS Corp's REAP (Revenue Enablement and Profitability) Framework has created opportunities for faster customer acquisition and has generated new recurring revenue streams for global clients in various sectors including Retail and Telecommunication.

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## **Science & Technology**

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### **Sawfish more threatened than tigers: Scientists...**

Scientists on World Sawfish Day (observed on October 17th) announced that sawfish, sighted off Indian coast less than 10 times in over a decade appears to be more threatened than tigers and elephants.

- Anecdotal evidence suggested that sawfish was once common along the Indian coast but today it may be the most endangered fish species in India.
- Sawfish also known as carpenter sharks are a family of rays.
- In the International Union for Conservation of Nature Global Red List, sawfish family has been assessed either 'Endangered' or 'Critically Endangered' considering their threatened status, high extinction risk and observed population decline. The sawfish has been given high degree of protection as it is listed in Schedule I of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972 enacted to save them from exploitation.

### **US to provide EMALS technology to India for aircraft carriers**

Trump Government has promised to provide the Electromagnetic Aircraft Launch System (EMALS) technology to India for aircraft carriers.

- The Electromagnetic Aircraft Launch System (EMALS), is a type of aircraft launching system currently under development by the General Atomics for United States Navy.
- EMALS weighs less, is expected to cost less and require less maintenance, and can launch aircraft that are heavier or lighter.
- This EMAL will help to launch heavy combat planes from the short runway of an aircraft carrier using electromagnetic force, instead of the old steam-powered catapults.
- The US has agreed to release this technology for the Indian Navy's under development future aircraft carrier, INS Vishal.

### **Odisha unveils portal for easy access to government data**

On 17th October 2017, Odisha government unveiled the State Open Government Data Platform named [www.odisha.data.gov.in](http://www.odisha.data.gov.in).

- This Government data Portal has been launched with the main objective of sharing data with people.
- Various service delivery departments like health & family welfare, education, women & child development were asked to upload their data on the platform.

### **Income Tax department launches 'online chat' to answer taxpayers queries**

The Income Tax Department has launched an 'online chat' service for taxpayers to seek answers to their basic queries and doubts relating to direct tax issues.

- A window has been hosted on the main page of the income tax department's website - [www.incometaxindia.gov.in/](http://www.incometaxindia.gov.in/) — with an icon stating 'Live Chat Online – ask your query.'
- A team of experts from the department and independent tax practitioners have been assigned to answer the general queries of a taxpayer.
- An option has been provided to the taxpayer for emailing the entire chat to their ids for future reference. More features would be added based on the feedback from users.

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## Sports

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### **Kerala High Court restores life ban on Sreesanth**

On 17th October 2017, the Kerala High Court restored life ban imposed on cricketer S.Sreesanth by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI).

- The order came on an appeal filed by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) CEO Rahul Johri against a single-judge verdict cancelling the life ban imposed on Sreesanth over allegation of IPL spot-fixing scandal.
- Sreesanth was imposed a life ban by the BCCI in 2015. He was charged with spot-fixing while playing for Rajasthan Royals in the Indian Premier League (IPL).
- The Kerala high court delivered its verdict that, for the time being, Sreesanth cannot play for the Kerala Ranji team and also cannot participate in practice sessions at any place that comes under the control of the BCCI or any State cricket association.

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## Obituary

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### **Congress MLA Ram Singh Yadav passes away**

Mr. Ram Singh Yadav, Congress MLA of Shivpuri (Madhya Pradesh) passed away on 18<sup>th</sup> Oct 2017 after a sudden heart attack. He was popularly known as "Dadaji" among his supporters. He was also holding the post of Shivpuri District Congress president.



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# Important Days

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## **International Day for the eradication of poverty – October 17**

On 17th October 2017, International Day for the Eradication of Poverty was observed all over the world.

- International Day for the Eradication of Poverty 2017 marks the 25th anniversary of the declaration by the UN General Assembly to celebrate 17th October as the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty.
- This day was chosen because on 17th October 1987, over a hundred thousand people gathered at the Trocadero in Paris, where the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was signed in 1948, to honour the victims of extreme poverty, violence and hunger.
- Theme for International Day for the Eradication of Poverty 2017 is: ‘Answering the Call of October 17 to end poverty: A path toward peaceful and inclusive societies’.

www.ambitionias.com